

Hood Canal Coordinating Council Lead Entity Habitat Project List Committee Meeting Notes

July 12, 2011 - 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Island Lake Community Center, 1087 NW Island Lake Road, Silverdale/Poulsbo, WA

Attendees: (*indicates HPLC Member)

- *Vern Rutter- HPLC Chair/ Mason County Citizen
- *Tom Springer- Mason County Citizen
- *Rebecca Mars- Kitsap County Citizen
- *Steve Rankin- North Olympic Peninsula Citizen
- *Phil Best- Kitsap County Citizen
- *Rebecca Benjamin- North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC)
- *Neil Werner- Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG)
- *Jamie Glasgow- Wild Fish Conservancy (WFC)
- * Keith Dublanica- Mason Conservation District (MCD)
Richard Brocksmith-Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC)
Heidi Huber- Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC)
Scott Brewer- Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC)
Pat McCullough- ESA Inc.
Doris Small- WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Dayna Hernandez- Western Washington University, Intern
Cheryl Baumann- North Olympic Peninsula Lead Entity (NOPE)

Purpose: To review the final proposed projects and technically-ranked list, evaluate social and economic merits of the proposals, and determine a final ranked project list to be forwarded to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

Available Funding: \$3,183,584 is the current estimate

Introductions, Review Agenda and Process for Habitat Project List Committee (HPLC)

We try and have equal citizen representation from each county. One Jefferson County space and one Clallam County space are vacant this round. 9 HPLC committee members are present for this meeting. Rebecca Benjamin and Vern Rutter were also present at the TAG meeting.

Refer to 2011 Process Guide for Meeting Structure, Membership and Ground Rules

All decisions are based on consensus unless a vote is needed.

Richard read the conflict of interest language in the 2011 Process Guide. HPLC members announced any potential conflicts of interest and these were discussed. Citizen members are non-aligned and thus had zero conflicts of interest while the project sponsor members had conflicts of interest with their own projects but not with other projects.

Public Comment: No public comment at this time.

Reviewed results from Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and looked over the HPLC Evaluation Criteria listed in the 2011 Process Guide

There were 13 independent reviewers on the TAG this year. Richard reviewed the TAG ranked list and walked through the TAG proposals, conditions, and “TAG supports” section of the TAG summary sheet.

General Discussion and Questions:

General Process Comments:

Comment: can we look at the TAG scores so we can see where the biggest gaps are between projects?

Comment: do people need more time to review notes prior? Do more HPLC folks need to attend the TAG?

Comment: list really reflects the highest priority domains as it carries a lot of weight . A really good or bad project can overcome that domain score however.

Comment: What does the money cover? Is it possible that the entire list could be executed? Partial funding isn't always helpful for project execution. Better to fund projects fully.

Comment from HPLC participant at the TAG: Biggest frustration was that some projects didn't provide accurate/complete information yet were scored high. Partly because TAG relies on numerous sources and their own technical knowledge not just materials on PRISM and HWS.

Comment: In defense of project number one, project experienced several major changes (acquisition to acquisition and restoration, coastal wetlands grant). Wasn't captured in both HWS and PRISM.

Comment: LE staff may not have assisted project sponsors as effectively this year. We are looking into improving our process.

Comment: Crucial to have completed projects in PRISM, that is where the money comes from.

Maynard Nearshore Restoration

Comment: Is Maynard nearshore (Discovery Bay) project part of the Hood Canal Lead Entity?

Response: Yes, we have funded numerous projects in this area.

Union River Estuary Restoration

“TAG Supports- Asking Pacific NW Salmon Center to continue investigating fish access into tributaries”

Sponsor Comment: the areas in question are not creeks, they are drainage ditches on the Pacific NW Salmon Center's farmland. If saltwater and fish flow into the drainage ditches, it may possibly affect the ability to farm the land, for example by County regulations for fish bearing areas creating more building restrictions and setbacks or by introducing salt into the soils. Currently setbacks are not required in these areas. Setbacks would eliminate the Salmon Center's ability to expand the facilities on that land. Salmon Center needs to consider all possibilities.

Comment: Is the use of these ditches still up in the air?

Response: Yes. We have offered to allow drainage ditches to be increased in size to prevent flooding of the farm but the Salmon Center doesn't want to lose the ability to farm and build on this land.

Comment: How does this affect the ranking of the Union project?

Response: The TAG highly supported the project as proposed, but also supports increased fish access into the upper wetlands and ditches.

Comment: Is water quality an issue in the ditches?

Sponsor response: No, ditches are typically well drained and the salmon center will be stewarding the land to ensure source control for pollutants. The ditches are fairly deep and run about 300 yards. Currently the ditches are cleaned out for farming purposes.

Comment: What type of vegetation surrounds the ditches?

Sponsor Comment: many of the ditches are covered with blackberry, but they will be planted in the future with native vegetation.

Comment: what is happening with the dikes further out (near red barn)?

Response: They are being removed as we speak in a very similar project approach.

How were the responses to citizen comments (specifically the “White Paper”) captured?

Response: HCCC staff forwarded citizen comments regarding the Union project to HPLC and TAG committees. If the concerns are technical in nature they were sent to the TAG. The TAG reviewed and some members scored the project lower due to the public comment as they felt it lowered the certainty of success of the project. The benefit to salmon for this project was ranked highly by majority of the TAG reviewers. It is likely the project would have ranked higher if the comments weren’t distributed during the TAG independent review. The community and economic concerns noted are similarly reviewed but by the HPLC.

Comment: It is important for citizens to be heard and for their input to be carefully considered, as seems to be the case in this situation.

Comment: Both the TAG and Citizen’s committee received the sponsor responses to the White Paper.

Comment: What is the Pacific NW Salmon Center and how is it related to this project?

Response: Pacific NW Salmon Center is a non-profit , adjacent property owner. They are focused on research and education on the importance of wild salmon in the ecosystem. HCSEG focuses on restoration. PNWSC Board members include several community members. 3 WDFW employees have been on the board in the past, but are not currently on the board nor have they been for multiple years.

Comment: I walked the property, and I was satisfied that it could be restored as part of the estuary.

Why would we have needed a dike if the land never was flooded? Will this project move forward?

Comment: this could be used as a teaching tool to show how fish access, farming and building can work together.

Sponsor Comment: the land will be a demonstration farm to show people how environment, salmon, farming can work together.

Comment: We also need to consider how this project can benefit PNWSC

Comment: this project has made compromises to keep the community happy, keep the trails. Does the smaller opening serve the purpose? As a tax payer is my money better spent putting a larger bridge somewhere else?

Response: The sponsor considered openings from 100 feet to 700 feet. There is a compromise between what we can afford and what is best for the habitat.

Response: Wave energy through a larger opening helps with sediment dynamics. It increases the habitat diversity and function with larger openings.

Comment: will this project provide a learning opportunity to help answer this question of what size opening?

Response: We hope so.

Comment: is this just a foot bridge? Yes. Concrete bridge is more expensive up front but it requires less maintenance over time and thus is similar in costs over its life span.

Comment: Theler trail is a huge asset.

Comment: Lots of opportunity for community education.

Comment: I am uncomfortable with SRFB dollars being used to put in fish passage barriers (tide gates on Union property), even though fish currently don’t have upstream access in this area. We need to be careful about what message we send to the public regarding the use of salmon money.

Response: being on agriculture land the ditches are maintained for agriculture. These ditches can contain fish during floods but they do not have full access to freely swim in and out. This land has poor quality soil, it has been used for haying and cattle in the past. The Salmon Center has already compromised and allowed the ditches to be expanded into ponds for holding stormwater. If the county will change the setback requirement on the agriculture land we will compromise on the fish passage issue.

Comment: MCD can work as an advocate for this project to help the landowner ensure they are optimizing their stewardship. There are numerous opportunities for collaboration and outreach.

Comment: someone referenced Smith Island and the Snohomish County rulings on land use.

Lower Big Beef Creek Restoration, Phase 1

Sponsor Comment: HCSEG would rather not have the project removed from the list (TAG recommended removing the project from the list temporarily until the sponsor was able to address several shortcomings). It is important to have this project on a ranked list for other funding opportunities.

Sponsor Comment: The landowner, University of WA (UW) isn't the problem. WDFW wants to keep the well access road.

Comment: Is the above statement accurate? That is not the understanding of some participants.

Comment: The TAG wants to limit the amount of compromises and increase the amount and quality of restoration. The UW, WDFW infrastructure results in physical constraints, compromising full restoration. Another issue is that in the process of restoration, there are short-term, negative effects on summer chum because of likely river avulsion. The TAG didn't think the project was technically viable due to all of the compromises.

Comment: the well is a back-up artesian well. It is a large water source. Seems unlikely it will be abandoned. The focus should be on removing the well access road.

Sponsor response: we have considered building an access road around the well

Comment: Well is currently not being used. Old well is there as a backup for the new well. Road is to access the old well.

Are we following the TAG recommendation for the Big Beef Project?

Proposal: Leave the Lower Big Beef Creek Restoration, Phase 1 project on the list. And turn the "TAG supports" note into a condition that reads **"Project sponsor should work to address TAG concerns and then TAG should review and concur with approach before proceeding with project #14"** **ADOPTED BY CONSENT**

Knotweed Control Riparian Enhancement

Comment: What has happened with the knotweed? It seems to have made a comeback in some areas.

Sponsor response: we have finished Union (excluding the estuary where many people including the above commenter see an extensive infestation along the road which HCSEG hasn't prioritized), replanting in the Union in the Fall (10,000 plants). Eradication/control is still needed in Tahuya, Big Quilcene, etc.

Comment: the county programs are underfunded and the noxious weed control boards can't fully tackle this issue. Hood Canal Regional knotweed control strategy brings everyone together to coordinate efforts.

Comment: How many years does it take of spraying/injecting to kill knotweed?

Response: 3 years of treatment, then we replant, monitor and touch up spots. Landowners call us when they see it coming back. It should be noted that this is a long-term commitment.

Comment: Have you had success working with landowners?

Sponsor Response: In Union 100% of the landowners are on board

Comment: In Skokomish several landowners don't want any county person on their property, but they are experiencing peer pressure from their neighbors.

Big Quilcene Delta Acquisition and Restoration

Comment: If the match doesn't come through how do we proceed?

Sponsor Comment: We will find another source for match if necessary. Or the project money goes back into the pot.

Comment: HCCC supports the sponsor decreasing their match (scaling back) commitment if necessary as long as it meets the 15% requirement. The TAG puts the highest priority on the acquisition piece, restoration is a bonus and subsequent.

Comment: Other proposed projects are in similar match situations. It is great that sponsors are providing over 50% match when only 15% is required.

Skokomish River Floodplain Acquisition/Restoration

Sponsor Comment: I wanted to communicate the tribe's desire to work with MCD to address floodplain recovery in this region (pointed to areas on the map). Think all parcels are important for salmon. Waiting for tribal match that will be incorporated into the proposal.

Comment: The sponsor is proposing a package of parcels but the package is only as strong as its weakest link. Some parcels are crucial, a couple are more expensive given existing development and less valuable for salmon recovery. This project received high domain points but the weaker areas made it score lower overall. SRFB money that trickles down through the list should be used on the highest priority parcels for salmon recovery. The HPLC did not change or condition this project. When funded this project could proceed as proposed.

General Comments about the list:

Currently there is a tie for number nine. Is there a possibility we could get less than the \$3,183,584? Do we need to prioritize these two projects?

Response from HCCC: We are fairly confident we will have the money as estimated, and will know with more certainty soon. It may have been a mistake to show the projects as a tie when the TAG had adopted the ranked list as originally proposed. The fact that the projects were tied should have been brought up earlier and more explicitly in the TAG discussion, but it wasn't.

Comment: I would rank the Washington Harbor project lower than Chimacum Creek Acquisition. Washington Harbor has high project costs due to specific requirements from the city of Sequim. The Chimacum creek project will acquire property that is part of a larger effort to create a protected habitat corridor for summer chum.

Motion to accept the TAG list as presented, with Lower Mainstem Chimacum Creek Acquisition ranked number 9, and WA Harbor Construction Phase ranked number 10. ADOPTED BY CONSENT

Final HPLC Ranked List:

(with the conditions described above and those carried forward from the TAG Ranking document)

1. Big Quilcene Delta Acquisition/Restoration
2. Dosewallips Floodplain & Estuary Restoration- 2011
3. Skokomish Estuary Restoration Phase 3
4. Maynard Nearshore Restoration
5. Union River Estuary Restoration
6. Lilliwaup Creek 100% Design Completion
7. Knotweed Control Riparian Enhancement- Year 4
8. Big Quilcene River Habitat Restoration Phase 3
9. Lower Mainstem Chimacum Creek Acquisition
10. Washington Harbor Restoration: Construction Phase
11. Hood Canal Nearshore Fish Use Assessment Year 1
12. Skokomish River Floodplain Acquisition/Restoration
13. Tahuya River LWD Placement Phase 2
14. Lower Big Beef Creek Restoration Phase 1